

Scaffolding

Definition Scaffolding helps student to connect prior knowledge and experience with new information. Teachers use this strategy to connect students with previous learning in a content area as well as with previous learning in an earlier grade. Scaffolding also helps facilitate thinking about a text by asking student to draw on their subjective experience and prior learning to make connections to new materials and ideas.

Advantages

- Supports student learning before, during, and after learning new content or skills
- Gives students a road map to follow when they read difficult text material
- Helps struggling readers to engage in text
- Builds college readiness by teaching procedures such as annotating text, using post-its effectively, etc.
- Puts ideas and concepts in context
- Fills in learning gaps
- Can take many forms such as graphic organizers, KEL (KWL) charts, brainstorming, etc.
- Assists students with making connections to texts either through life experience or previous readings

Actually, it ...

- Assists students with understanding what they're reading
- Promotes and propels rigorous discourse
- Offers all students an opportunity to be successful readers
- Develops metacognition skills
- Bridges the gap between what students already know and what they need to learn
- Builds student confidence as they develop more tools for accessing new and/or difficult materials

Characteristics of Scaffolding

- Provide clear directions
- Clarify purpose
- Keep students on task
- Offer assessment to clarify purpose
- Direct students to worthy sources
- Reduce uncertainty and disappointment
- Deliver efficiency
- Create momentum

Scaffolding Through-out the Lesson

1. **The teacher does it** - In other words, the teacher models how to perform a new or difficult task, such as how to use a graphic organizer. For example, the teacher may have a partially completed graphic organizer on an overhead transparency and "think aloud" as he or she describes how the graphic organizer illustrates the relationships among the information contained on it.
2. **The class does it** - The teacher and students work together to perform the task. For example, the students may suggest information to be added to the graphic organizer. As the teacher writes the suggestions on the transparency, students fill in their own copies of the organizer.
3. **The group does it** - Students work with a partner or a small cooperative group to complete a graphic organizer (i.e., either a partially completed or a blank one).
4. **The individual does it** - This is the independent practice stage where individual students can demonstrate their task mastery (e.g., successfully completing a graphic organizer to demonstrate appropriate relationships among information) and receive the necessary practice to help them to perform the task automatically and quickly.

Objectives of Scaffolding

- Connect student background by making predictions about text.
- Predict text content through pictures.
- Make connections through personal experiences to text content.
- Interrelate concepts using a structured overview and visuals.
- Keep notes in margins while reading.
- Self-question as sections of the text are read.
- Work collaboratively in a group.
- Create a Glogster or Prezi to present the most important information about your group's selected topic.

Scaffolding Strategies

- activating prior knowledge
- offering a motivational context to pique student interest or curiosity in the subject at hand
- breaking a complex task into easier, more "doable" steps to facilitate student achievement
- showing students an example of the desired outcome before they complete the task
- modeling the thought process for students through "think aloud" talk
- offering hints or partial solutions to problems
- using verbal cues to prompt student answers
- teaching students chants or mnemonic devices to ease memorization of key facts or procedures
- facilitating student engagement and participation
- displaying a historical timeline to offer a context for learning
- using graphic organizers to offer a visual framework for assimilating new information
- teaching key vocabulary terms before reading
- guiding the students in making predictions for what they expect will occur in a story, experiment, or other course of action
- asking questions while reading to encourage deeper investigation of concepts
- suggesting possible strategies for the students to use during independent practice
- modeling an activity for the students before they are asked to complete the same or similar activity
- asking students to contribute their own experiences that relate to the subject at hand

Examples of Graphic Organizers to Use with Scaffolding

1. **Spider Map:** Used to describe a central idea: a thing (a geographic region), process (meiosis), concept (altruism), or proposition with support (experimental drugs should be available to AIDS victims). Key frame questions: What is the central idea? What are its attributes? What are its functions?
2. **Series of Events Chain:** Used to describe the stages of something (the life cycle of a primate); the steps in a linear procedure (how to neutralize an acid); a sequence of events (how feudalism led to the formation of nation states); or the goals, actions, and outcomes of a historical figure or character in a novel (the rise and fall of Napoleon). Key frame questions: What is the object, procedure, or initiating event? What are the stages or steps? How do they lead to one another? What is the final outcome?
3. **Continuum Scale:** Used for time lines showing historical events or ages (grade levels in school), degrees of something (weight), shades of meaning (Likert scales), or ratings scales (achievement in school). Key frame questions: What is being scaled? What are the end points?
4. **Compare/Contrast Matrix:** Used to show similarities and differences between two things (people, places, events, ideas, etc.). Key frame question: What things are being compared? How are they similar? How are they different?
5. **Fishbone Map:** Used to show the causal interaction of a complex event (an election, a nuclear explosion) or complex phenomenon (juvenile delinquency, learning disabilities). Key frame questions: What are the factors that cause X? How do they interrelate? Are the factors that cause X the same as those that cause X to persist?
6. **Cycle:** Used to show how a series of events interact to produce a set of results again and again (weather phenomena, cycles of achievement and failure, the life cycle). Key frame questions: What are the critical events in the cycle? How are they related? In what ways are they self-reinforcing?